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Patient Centered
Cost-Effective Health Care

From Dr. Katz

FAST FACTS

A Message From the Director



The opening of supportive housing for 89 persons (see article to the right) is a wonderful story. It begins with blighted properties, known for pulling down the property values of a neighborhood. The properties were rehabbed—they look great—and now serve to raise, not lower, the quality of life of the neighborhood. But even better, the properties are filled with persons who were previously homeless and suffering from chronic medical problems. At the opening, there were very few dry eyes in the large crowd listening to Sal and Louis, two residents of the buildings talking about how much the housing the meant to them, how it showed that people cared for them, and that they could live meaningful and dignified lives because now they had a roof over their heads. The opening of the housing also made me think how far DHS has come. We are no longer a department focused only on emergency care and hospitalization. Now, we seek to prevent illness and disability, and improve the quality of life of our patients so that they don't need more expensive emergency services and long hospital stays. Supportive housing is just one of the many programs we will be initiating to keep people healthier and improve their functional status. I hope that everyone in DHS goes to sleep tonight thinking that they were part of making sure that other people could also go to sleep in a safe place.



Tenant Sal Tovar used to be a frequent user of DHS hospital services. Today he is engaged to be married and starting a new life in supportive housing.

For Housing Tenants, It's Life on Their Terms

By Michael Wilson

The tidy two-story apartment building on 10th Avenue in South Central blends in with the single family homes in the neighborhood. Kids play down the street and the bustle of Slauson Avenue is a few blocks away.

There's no sign this used to be a blighted building and community eyesore. The old swimming pool is now a lush courtyard, and new paint hides the past. The spacious one-bedroom apartments have been rehabbed with wood floors and new appliances. Some tenants have flat screen TVs and leather sofas. And there's a sense of community here. You get the feeling a neighbor will knock on the door to borrow some sugar or come in for movie night.

This building is one of 15 new supportive housing sites that officially opened on March 3 that will collectively house 89 chronically homeless individuals and former high utilizers of County-run health services. With help from a rental subsidy and onsite health services, the apartments offer a chance at a new life, and with any success, improved health to enjoy it.

"Today is a celebration of leadership, collaboration, innovation, and turning blight to right," said Yolanda Vera, senior health deputy to County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, who represents the district where the housing projects are located. "This is the beginning of a revolution led by the County and our partners."

DHS is leading that revolution with the help of many partners to develop a portfolio of permanent supportive housing across the County; in fact, the department hopes to create as many as 10,000 such units in five years. The tenants selected for housing aren't just homeless, they also battle chronic illnesses. The key to success, advocates say, is providing onsite supportive services like medical care and substance abuse assistance to keep them housed. It's also a matter of economics. The cost of housing a homeless individual for a month is less than a single night in a County-run hospital.

Sal, a 51 year-old tenant, says his world collapsed after losing both of his parents. Soon after, his teenage son was shot to death at a bus stop. Within months he found himself homeless. "I'd take bird baths in the park restroom to stay clean. I never gave up hope. God upstairs heard my prayers." He learned about a chance to gain housing during a six-month hospital stay after a motorcycle accident.

Another resident, 58 year-old Louis, says he was the guy you didn't want to bring home to meet mom. Slight of build and heavily tattooed, he was a meth addict who also ran a meth lab and transported it. After 30 years behind bars, staying clean and sober is still a challenge after 17 years. As he recovers from having his foot

(See 'Tenants' on back)

Sayles to Lead Care Continuity, Coordination Efforts

By Michael Wilson

Jennifer N. Sayles, MD, MPH joins Olive View - UCLA Medical Center as Assistant Chief Medical Officer for Managed Care and Delivery System Integration and will concurrently serve as DHS Director of Value-Based Healthcare Innovation. On the hospital side, she will be responsible for operationalizing components of health care reform into practice, including adopting the core principles of "managing the care" of patients through population health management and working as an integrated delivery system to provide coordinated and patient-centered care. She will also focus on managing and coordinating the care of patients across acute, specialty, and medical home settings to achieve the best health outcomes. In her larger DHS role, she will focus on achieving

(See 'Sayles' on back)



On Time, On Budget: DHS Drives Thought Leadership in Project Management

By Michael Wilson

Good project management takes more than organization. It requires people who have the skills to move a project from concept to completion and manage the inevitable disruptions. Whether launching a new website or opening a new hospital, project managers must meet milestones, hold people accountable, and manage all of the moving parts. The DHS Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) has taken on a larger role in the field of management and leadership by developing and hosting quarterly education sessions with project management and executive leaders from diverse industries such as finance, entertainment, construction and health care. The goal is to foster the sharing of best practices across the region with support and guidance from the Project Management Institute (PMI), the global body that certifies project and program managers. “The field is no longer niche,” says DHS program manager Jonathan Won. “Project management is a skillset that is now expected within general management and leadership. Whether you’re making movies, building high rises, or delivering healthcare, you want a successful outcome and there are best practices to achieve those results.” When the EPMO was tasked with finding resources and training opportunities with practically no budget, DHS partnered with PMI association leaders who were looking for an innovative way to connect region

members. The EPMO, with the support of DHS management, designed a unique series and hosted it in the Health Services Administration auditorium downtown. Since 2010, the event has become the largest and most diverse free programming within PMI’s Los Angeles region. At the upcoming May 1, 2014 meeting, DHS has invited veteran leaders to discuss the popular management topic of how to identify, mitigate and resolve conflicts and risks. The invited speakers will discuss strategies and tips that mediators and managers use to reduce the potential risks of conflicts negatively impacting project work. At the last meeting, speakers discussed lessons learned on how to stay focused on goals without over-planning. The session did a deep-dive into obtaining support from various areas of an organization, getting accurate information on the project’s scope, budget, and time frame, and determining available resources for implementation and support. Employees looking to make a career change or just stay competitive may want to attend a few of the sessions, which are open to DHS employees for free. After the recession, companies are looking for employees with the skills to get things done on time and on budget. For more information on upcoming events, email epmo@dhs.lacounty.gov.

(‘Tenants’)

amputated at LAC+USC Medical Center from a staph infection, he says his past still haunts him. “Now I try to help people as much as I can because of the poison I pushed out on the street for years. I’m not sure how many people I killed who took the drug or killed others when they were using it.” The DHS Housing for Health unit works with a range of private and government partners including the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, West Bay Housing, Housing Works and others to develop permanent supportive housing across the County, provide onsite health care services, and identify eligible patients in most need of permanent housing. For the homeless residents here on 10th Avenue and at the other housing sites, there’s a new joy to be found in doing laundry and even paying bills. “I’m peaceful now,” says William as he stands tall in his living room. “I’m living life on my terms.”

(‘Sayles’)

more coordination and consistency around the use of high cost services, with the goal of maximizing the value of the healthcare DHS provides. Her first area of focus will be in the area of screening and diagnostics. Prior to joining DHS, she served as the Medical Director of Quality Improvement and Health Assessment at LA Care Health Plan. Her accomplishments there included improving safety net access and quality of care through disease management programs, patient centered medical home initiatives, readmission reduction, and engagement with providers to improve capacity to serve low income communities. Earlier she served as the Medical Director of the Division of HIV and STD Programs in the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. She is a graduate of Princeton University, Chicago Medical School, and completed her clinical training in Internal Medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and UCLA. She received a Masters in Public Health from the UCLA School of Public Health and completed fellowships in health services research and HIV medicine. She maintains teaching appointments at the UCLA School of Medicine and the RAND Corporation.

Rancho Patients Get Hand with Public Transit

By Sarah Kirwan

Patients at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center are getting practice boarding and exiting Metro buses thanks to a new collaboration between Rancho’s Patient Advisory Council and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). The program aims to build the confidence and comfort level needed to take advantage of the service Metro has to offer. Once patients return to their community, they will have the self-reliance and know-how needed to ride the bus, which will help them increase their independence. The practice sessions are enhanced by ACCESS Services, which also provides transportation to persons with disabilities in the County, but unlike Metro, doesn’t have fixed routes and is more flexible. Trained person-

nel from ACCESS assist patients by offering free marking and tethering. Patients can have their permanent mobility device marked with tape or a tethering attached to it. By marking and tethering the mobility device of patients, bus operators will know the best location from which to strap it, thus affording patients the safest transportation possible. The “Practice Bus Program” coupled with the free wheelchair marking and tethering assists Rancho patients in building the self-confidence needed to make use of public transportation in the most safe and time efficient way possible. Patients have the opportunity to benefit from



this program on the third Thursday of every month. At each practice session, a multitude of informational material is provided to patients to assist them in navigating through Metro and ACCESS services.